

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 04215 131400Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----131401Z 048799 /43
O 131327Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6655

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4215

EXDIS

PASS WHITE HOUSE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IS
SUBJECT: TIMING AND ATMOSPHERICS FOR BEGIN VISIT

1. MENAHEM BEGIN TOLD ME THIS MORNING THAT HE WOULD PRESENT HIS NEW CABINET TO THE KNESSET FOR APPROVAL ON JUNE 20. HE WOULD LIKE TO VISIT WASHINGTON DURING THE SECOND HALF OF JULY, AFTER JULY 15. (I INFER HE WANTS TIME TO ORGANIZE HIS GOVERNMENT AND TO PREPARE HIMSELF CAREFULLY FOR WASHINGTON MEETINGS; THERE ARE ALSO PERSISTENT, UNCONFIRMED STORIES CIRCULATING THAT HIS DOCTORS HAVE URGED HIM NOT TO UNDERTAKE THIS STRENUOUS TRIP PRECIPITOUSLY.)

2. TODAY'S MAARIV CARRIES UNSOURCED STORY THAT I AM RETURNING TO WASHINGTON SHORTLY ON CONSULTATION AND EXPECT TO RETURN WITH AN INVITATION FOR DAYAN TO GO TO WASHINGTON BEFORE BEGIN'S OWN TRIP. WEHN ASKED, WE ARE CALMLY SAYING WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT IT. (THIS HAS THE VIRTUE OF BEING TRUE.)

3. IF ANYONE HAD BEEN THINKING OF THIS IDEA, IT SHOULD BE DROPPED IN THE WAKE OF THIS PREMATURE PUBLICITY.
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BEGIN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH DAYAN IS A TRICKY ONE; DAYAN IS LEANING OVER BACKWARDS JUST NOW TO DEFER PUBLICLY TO HIM. BEGIN IS HIGHLY SENSITIVE TO DIPLOMATIC NICETIES --AND WILL BE ESPECIALLY JEALOUS OF THE SYMBOLS OF POLITICAL POWER, WHICH HE HAS FINALLY OBTAINED. A PROUD MAN, BEGIN WOULD NOW RESENT, I AM CERTAIN, HAVING THE BETTER KNOWN DAYAN PRECEDE HIM TO "SMOOTH THE WAY"

FOR WHAT HE REGARDS AS A CLIMACTIC EVENT, HIS MEETINGS WITH THE PRESIDENT. NORMALLY SUCH A SEQUENCE WOULD BE LOGICAL AND ACCEPTED. IN THIS CASE, NOW THAT THE IDEA HAS SURFACED IN THE PRESS, IT WOULD ONLY ENDANGER OUR CHANCES FOR HAMMERING OUT A WORKABLE UNDERSTANDING WITH THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT.

4. SINCE THE PRESS HAS HAD MUCH TO SAY ABOUT A CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE AN INVITATION FROM PRESIDENT TO BEGIN, I OUGHT TO HAVE IT IN HAND TO PRESENT TO HIM IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING APPROVAL OF THIS GOVERNMENT BY THE KNESSET. THAT WILL OCCUR ALMOST CERTAINLY IN LATE AFTERNOON OR EVENING OF MONDAY, JUNE 20. HOPE THEREFORE MESSAGE CAN BE DESPATCHED FROM WASHINGTON NO LATER THAN SATURDAY, JUNE 18. WE ARE SENDING SEPTEL SOME POINTS FOR POSSIBLE INCLUSION.
LEWIS

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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